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ABSTRACT

A study examined repair in native-nonnative (Mandarin) speaker English conversation, focusing primarily on the previously unobserved lexical element "yeah" which occurs in a speaker's ongoing or same turn at talk. Conversational analysis was used to examine the data collected and transcribed. The data was composed of roughly 120 pages of transcript, consisting of naturally occurring telephone conversations from 12 native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) dyads. The speakers were friends who ordinarily have occasion to chat with one another, and topics were not suggested or assigned. Results indicated that, on some occasions, NNSs use the resources of the language to create new or alternative ways of dealing with troubles in talk and, in so doing, they display their identities as NNSs--as speakers and learners of the language of interaction at one and the same time. Findings reveal how dynamic and sequentially attuned oral practices are. Findings also suggest the resources of the language which second language learners of English bring to the interaction may, at times, be different from those deployed by native speakers. (Contains 32 figures and 33 references.) (CR)

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A Sequential Place for Marking Incipient Repair Solution: "Yeah" in Nonnative Speaker English Conversation[1]

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[1] This article represents a revised version of a chapter from my dissertation. 1994. Repair in Native-Nonnative English Conversation: The Element "Yeah" in Same Turn Repair and Delayed Next Turn Repair Initiation. The present version was delivered at the annual convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, 1997. Earlier versions of this article were delivered at New York State, TESOL, 1992, and at the Georgetown Linguistics Society conference on Discourse on Mosaic, 1996. I remain deeply indebted to my dissertation co-chairs, Emanuel Schegloff and Marianne Celce-Murcia, for valuable comments, insights, and encouragement. I also thank Hanneke Houtkoop-Senstra for providing some Dutch data which was used in an earlier verison of the article and Cecilia Ford for useful comments on this version of the article. Any remaining errors are mine, however.

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Abstract

This article is concerned with a previously unobserved lexical element—"yeah"—observed in the speech of nonnative speakers of English whose native language is Mandarin. Using conversation analysis as a framework, I show that the element "yeah" forms part of the organization of a self-initiated repair segment and is indicative of a sequential place in the trajectory of a repair. The findings reveal how dynamic and sequentially-attuned oral practices (Hall, 1993) are, and moreover, they suggest that the resources of the language which second language learners of English bring to the interaction may, at times, be different from those deployed by native speakers.

"Yeah" in Nonnative Speaker English Conversation

A Sequential Place for Marking Incipient Repair Solution:

"Yeah" in Nonnative Speaker English Conversation

Introduction

This article examines repair in native-nonnative speaker English conversation, focusing primarily on the lexical element "yeah" which occurs in a speaker's ongoing or same turn at talk. While prior work has discussed "yeah" as an acknowledgment token (Yngve, 1970), backchannel signal (Duncan, 1972), and marker of speaker incipiency (Jefferson, 1993; Drummond and Hopper, 1993; Zimmerman, 1993), the "yeah" introduced here is of a different function, of interest for three reasons. First, "yeah" occurs in turn-medial position (the "yeah" discussed in past literature occurs predominantly in turn-initial position). Second, this form of "yeah" is not found in the speech of native speakers of American English (NSs) but is found in the speech of nonnative speakers of English (NNSs) whose native language is Mandarin. Third, "yeah" forms part of the organization of a self-initiated repair segment, namely, same-turn repair, and is indicative of a sequential place in the trajectory of a repair.

The study began as an initial attempt to compare conversational practices of same-turn repair produced by native speakers of American English (Schegloff et al., 1977; Schegloff, 1979) with those produced by nonnative speakers of English and henceforth, for the purposes of this article, are defined as those whose native language is Mandarin. Although the focus of the article is not on that aspect of the research (forthcoming), it is noted that in the review of the literature section which follows, by using examples produced by nonnative speakers of English to illustrate systematic features of same-turn repair in ordinary conversation, in essence I reveal that repair is

strikingly similar across native and nonnative speaker same-turn environments. That native speaker same-turn repair practices are confirmed in the speech of speakers who are second language learners is worth noting, it suggests the possible universal nature of the model of the organization of repair (cf. Moerman, 1977; Schegloff et al., 1977).

With respect to the element "yeah," the findings of the study reconfirm how broad and flexible forms of conversational organization are (Heritage, 1989), as well as demonstrate how dynamic and sequentially-attuned oral practices (Hall, 1993) which both shape and constitute daily life situated contexts in actuality are. What is more, if, say, being a nonnative speaker of the language is a relevant feature of the conversation, an analyst should be able to show how it is, using the details of the talk, that the nonnative speaker constructs the talk, orients to the talk, or repairs the talk in ways which are different from that done in conversation between native speakers. In point, Schegloff (1991) has noted about the invocation of context that there is first and foremost for the interactants but for a research analyst as well a problem of relevance:

> The point is not that persons are somehow not male or female, upper or lower class, with or without power, professors and/or students. They may be, on some occasions, demonstrably members of one or another of those categories. Nor is the issue that those aspects of the society do not matter, or did not matter on that occasion...There is still the problem of **showing from the details of the talk or other conduct in the material** that we are analyzing that those aspects of the scene are what the **parties** are oriented to. **For that is to show how the parties are embodying for one another the relevancies of the interaction and are thereby producing the social structure**. (Schegloff, 1991, p. 51, emphases are his).

The proposed analysis of a previously unobserved lexical element, "yeah," contributes to a small body of research which applies the conversation analytic framework to NS-NNS spoken interaction. It represents an exercise in looking at 'the talk itself' (Schegloff, lectures) for evidence that the resources of the language which second language learners have available and bring to the interaction may, on some occasions, be different from those deployed by native speakers of English. Although future research will need to clarify this, it may be that in their linguistic encoding of the element "yeah" in the sequential environment of same-turn repair, the native speakers of Mandarin in my corpus in part reflect and construct their identities as nonnative speakers of English, more specifically, as speakers and learners of the language of interaction.

Before reporting on the element "yeah," I situate the discussion against the backdrop of linguistic and conversation analytic research on self-initiated repair. Discussion of research in the latter vein is more extensive since the approach guiding this study is conversation analysis.

Self-initiated Repair in Linguistic Work

For applied linguists examining the phenomenon of spontaneous repair, namely, hesitations, cut-offs, filled and unfilled pauses, restarts, repetitions, paraphrases, restructurings, and the like, one motive is to better understand the processes of language acquisition. Scholars have turned away from viewing spontaneous repairs as performance errors or as symptoms of language deficiency. They now consider the role and function of spontaneous repairs in a speaker's developing competence in the language being learned. Research of this kind can be traced along at least three paths.

One path has led researchers to examine self-repairs in light of the notion of fluency. Analysts (e.g. Fillmore, 1979; Butler-Wall, 1986; Riggenbach, 1989) have focused on how to

define the notion of fluency, that is, what language features are present in fluent speech. Through this research we have come to view disfluencies in oral speech as a necessary and sufficient condition in overall perceptions of fluency. For native speakers, disfluencies are both normal and systematic, serving as useful organizational functions in everyday language. Nonnative speakers, in coming to master the target language, need an ability to produce disfluencies in native-like ways, otherwise they run the risk of producing speech which not only sounds rehearsed and unnatural, but hinders efforts to achieve interpersonal goals such as preserving and maintaining face (cf. Goffman, 1967; Butler-Wall, 1986).

Another path which scholars have followed has used spontaneous repairs as a window to examine children's awareness of language (e.g., Clark and Andersen, 1979; Garvey, 1984; McTear, 1985). Clark and Andersen, for example, using child language one data, have reported that children begin to produce self-repairs around the age of one and a half to two years. At this early age, children are able to monitor their speech unprompted, check to see whether a repair is needed, and if so, produce an utterance which resolves or addresses the problem. The spontaneous repairs found in Clark and Andersen's data are developmental in sequence. Phonological repairs appear initially and are the most frequent form of self-repair; these repairs gradually diminish as syntactic and lexical repairs increase.

Clark and Andersen have also noted two major classes of self-repair in child language: repairs for the listener, which are motivated by the need to make oneself understood, and repairs to the linguistic system, which are not motivated by attempts to be more intelligible. The latter form of spontaneous repair, according to Clark and Andersen, contributes to the process of language acquisition. Children monitor, check, and self-repair those parts of the linguistic system

they are in the process of acquiring, those parts in which they notice a mismatch between stored representation and linguistic output.

A third path which linguists have followed relates to the notion of communication strategies (e.g., Tarone, 1980 and 1981; Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Bialystok, 1990). At issue here is the question of how nonnative speakers of the target language cope with a deficient or incomplete language system. Researchers have examined the strategies or tactics which nonnative speakers employ in resolving communicative difficulties. In this context, some analysts view self-repairs as evidence that the language learner has trouble in executing his or her intended message. For example, the lexicalized filled pauses (e.g., 'uh,' 'um,' etc.) which often precede a self-repair are viewed as allowing the learner more time to plan his or her intended message and as signaling the interactional function of repair (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

I have briefly touched upon some of the ways in which linguists have approached the phenomenon of self-repair in spoken discourse. As mentioned earlier, a consistent focus is developmental. A first or second language learner's increasing ability to repair his or her own talk is viewed as points along an interlanguage continuum, somewhere along the road to fluency. Yet what is still largely an empirical issue is how self-initiated repairs (and other forms of repair) produced by native speakers of English serve as a baseline from which an analyst distinguishes those self-repairs which possibly reflect language acquisition processes from those which **any** speaker might produce in a given context. I will illustrate with a few examples from the literature on communication strategies.

(1)

[Note: 'L' is a nonnative speaker and second language learner]

L: my tummy- my tummy is- I have (inaudible) I must eat something

[Faerch and Kasper 1983, p. 50]

(2)

L: so suddenly you have to plan your- all your whole day you know

NS: mm

[Haastrup and Phillipson 1983, p. 151]

Both of the above instances are taken to reflect the communication strategy of restructuring. The nonnative speaker has difficulty in articulating her intended message and restructures the utterance as a solution to the problem. Yet notice that these instances are different from one another.

For example, in the first instance, the speaker abandons one way of saying something in favor of another. By the end of the turn, speaker L has changed her turn initial utterances ("my tummy- my tummy is-" and "I have") to an entirely different utterance ("I must eat something"). Her self-repairs culminate in a new, fresh start. In the second instance, speaker L's self-repair is done as an insertion of the item "all" into the troublesource talk. The speaker has not abandoned the troublesource utterance but constructs the talk and repair in a manner which displays that what she is saying now is a modified version of what she was saying before. The repair initiator done as a cutoff ("your-") and its subsequent repetition after the inserted item ("all your whole day...") contribute to the sense that the self-repair is built as a same but modified version of the troublesource utterance.

In conversation analysis, the above instances are forms of same-turn repair. The first example is one of aborted attempt, and the second example is one of insertion (cf. next section). Forms of restructuring or same-turn repair such as these are generic practices of mundane conversation, features of the organization of repair (Schegloff et al., 1977). The suggestion that second language learners make special use of communication strategies (e.g., restructuring) as a means of coping with an inadequate, incomplete language system, that is, in ways which are different from how native speakers would cope under similar contexts, is in need of refinement and empirical confirmation.

Nonetheless, that just said, in this study I have found that the element "yeah" is a feature of same-turn repair segments which is distinctive to NNSs. In their use of the element "yeah" in the environment of same-turn repair, these speakers display at a subtle level the degree to which second language learners orient to sequential matters in the achievement of conversation. Before turning to an analysis of the element "yeah," I provide some background on the notion of same-turn repair. The background purposely draws on examples of same-turn repair produced by nonnative speakers in the data collected, in order to show that features of the organization of same-turn repair (Schegloff, 1979) are found in nonnative speaker conversation. With the exception of Gaskill's study (1980), which involved only one NS-NNS dyad and focused on confirming a preference for self-correction (Schegloff et al., 1977), prior work has not examined whether or not the practices of the organization of same-turn repair are applicable to nonnative speaker English conversation.

Same Turn Repair in Conversation Analysis

The repair of talk affects the formation of sentences, in effect creating a syntax-for-conversation (Schegloff, 1979). As Schegloff (1991) has noted:

> sounds, words, sentences--have the character they do, and are formed the way they are, in part because they are to inhabit an environment in which the apparatus of repair is available and in which, accordingly, flexible arrangements can be permitted (Schegloff, 1991, p. 155)

Rights to initiate and do repair are allocated to participants in interaction on a turn by turn basis. In the same or current turn, the speaker of the troublesource utterance gets the first opportunity to initiate a repair as in the following instance:

(3)

Li: Oh:: that- this is the las' quarter y- right?

[SL, 5:14]

Li's replacement of "that-" with "this" is a same-turn repair, one which is initiated and resolved in the turn which contains the troublesource.

Same-turn repairs are by far the most common form of repair in mundane conversation (Schegloff et al., 1977). Moreover, the tasks of locating a troublesource utterance, initiating and doing repair as early as possible are interactional matters for participants. Interactants employ a variety of techniques for accomplishing repair in the same turn, among which prior work (Schegloff, 1979) has identified the following.

Replacement;

"At thuh of-" is replaced by "in thuh office":

(4)

Joan: [*h yeah.

Chen: [Yes uh:: his uh:: secretary told me that *h uh

→ (she) (he) would be working at the of- in thuh office from two to four.

[JC, 4:21]

Insertion;

Chen cuts off the item "numb-", undergoes a search (signaled by the "um uh::"), and after the search inserts the item "phone":

(5)

Chen: He was: uh not at his office uh I jus uh ask uh

his secretary to:: give uh my numb- um uh:: phone number to him.

[CJ, 4:12]

Deletion;

The "the::" in the utterance "you finish the::" is deleted in the repair, "you finish M.A.":

(6)

→ Li: An' you have to finish thesis an' then you finish the:: e- you finish M.A.

[SL, 4:9]

Aborted Attempt;

Hong abandons the utterance with which she began the turn. The repair, "tch well actually..." is a different version of the troublesome utterance.

(7)

Hong: *H Well um(h) last year's(h) um:: there

→ are f- some um tch well actually I was in a dilemma *h an:: I didn't know whether I go to um *h uh uh s-stay in nuh School of Public Health or::d *h change my major to clinical sociology

[HA, 11:2-3]

Word Search.

Ruan may have been searching for the words 'two-liter' (or 'three-liter') but the outcome of his search is "a big big coke":

(8)

Liz: Yeah okay

Liz: [whatever's easier yeah

Ruan: [so how- okay how many:: (0.2) fifteen people okay let me see it's *h

→ like three(.) three like three: like three: what is called uh: like(.) a big big coke like-things like that?

Ruan: [Is that enough?

Liz: [Yeah

[RL, 5:13]

In the above exemplars, as is the case for any same-turn repair, one context of its occurrence is within the current turn before its possible completion. That is to say, when a speaker takes a turn at talk, what he or she takes on is the interactional task of talking to a first possible completion of the turn at which point an opportunity for the next speaker to talk opens up. The current speaker builds the talk of the turn so that each next bit is heard by the recipient as a 'next' in relation to some just prior bit of talk. Out of these successive next bits of talk a

projection for how the talk will develop and lead to a turn's first possible completion is formed (Sacks et al., 1974). Now the interactional task of doing a repair before the end of a current turn will affect the ongoing shape of that turn, disrupting the buildup of next items. From the moment when repair is initiated to the moment when repair is completed, the development of the talk shifts from what was projected next to the projection of a repair segment. At the moment of repair-initiation, the trajectory is now possibly repair and not ongoing talk, at least until the talk which addresses and/or completes the repair has been delivered (Schegloff et al., 1977).

How does a speaker signal or initiate repair in the current turn? How does the trajectory of the talk change from ongoing talk to repair? These concerns, interactional tasks for participants, form a part of the building and shaping of a repair segment.

The Repair Segment

In the course of an ongoing turn at talk, a current speaker may construct the talk so that both speaker and recipient orient to the activity of repair. One common method by which a current speaker initiates a repair is the use of a nonlexical perturbation, for example, a cut-off, sound stretch, uh,[1] um, and the like.[2]

The nonlexical repair initiator may address a problem with a prior item or a problem with a next item. Schegloff (1979) uses the term postpositioned to describe repair initiators which occur after some already produced troublesource item (e.g., the cut-off) and the term prepositioned to describe repair initiators which occur before the item upon which repair will be initiated (e.g., uh which often precedes a word search). For example in (4) above, the repair initiator (the cutoff "of-") is postpositioned, occurring after the troublesource element (the preposition "at") has already been produced. In contrast, in (8) above, the repair initiator "uh:," which is preceded by

an announced search ("what is called"), is prepositioned, occurring before the item upon which repair is initiated.

Now after initiating a same-turn repair with a pre or postpositioned nonlexical perturbation, the current speaker ordinarily addresses the troublesource utterance, producing the talk which completes the projected repair. Thus the repair segment is viewed as the interactional space between the start of a repair and its completion, and after which the ongoing development of the talk may resume.

The repair segment may be short as in case (9) in which the problem ("thr-") and its solution ("two") occur immediately adjacent to one another:

(9)

Sara: ...how's school?

(0.2)

→ Li: Uh huh *h uh:: now:: I choose (0.2) thr- two da::ys at school.

[SL, 1:15]

Alternatively, the repair segment may be long as in case (10) in which Huang makes multiple attempts at providing an English equivalent for the Chinese word "shao," the middle name of her baby:

(10)

Huang: ...and then shao means um (0.4) mm means sum let me see shao means uh *h an::: (0.6) how can I say issa yih know *h mmeans uh f- how can I ( ) an:: (1.2) um:: (h)uh-(h)uh I cannot- can't say English

Vera: ehuh-huh-huh-huh

Huang: *h that means um mm yih know an' ss- some- some- something happen nnow or ss- some- some- some- something will become

[HV, 14:5]

There are also repair segments which are neither as short nor as long as the instances just displayed above. Yet what the long and the short of it is intended to capture here is that there is no fixed or preestablished length to a repair segment. How long or short a repair segment ends up being is the product of an interactional process. Here it is relevant to mention the notion of tries (Schegloff, 1979), which is explained as efforts undertaken by a speaker to make repair in a single turn at talk. A same-turn repair segment gets its length in part based on the number of tries a current speaker makes in righting a troublesome utterance. Quite often, one try at trouble-resolution will suffice (Schegloff, 1979) as in (9) above. The repair segment is no sooner begun (at the "thr-") than it is completed (at the "two"). Same-turn repairs of this kind are regarded as compacted (Schegloff et al., 1977) because there is little or virtually no gap between the problem and its solution.

Nonetheless, on other occasions, one try is not sufficient to make the repair. Some repair segments are built as a series of tries on the same repairable. In (11), Han is about to move to a new apartment and had, prior to this conversation, made arrangements to borrow Irene's pick-up truck for the move. But as it turns out, Han does not need to borrow Irene's truck because he has arranged to share the truck of the tenants moving into the apartment which he is vacating. In this fragment, Han expresses thanks but no thanks:

(11)

Irene: Well good::

Irene: [that was (really) fun

→ Han: [So thankew thankew very- anyway ff- for the- for your (0.2)

Irene: °h Oh

Irene: [(wo yau-) ((Mandarin for I want))

→ Han: [he-help for your(.) offering your help(h)(h) wi

→ Han: [th the truck

Irene: [Oh:::

Han: °h B't anyway I think I can manage in our(h) eh

Irene: =As- as we say in::

Han: =Nn

Han: [huh

Irene: [Beijing meiguanxi ((Mandarin for no problem))

[IH, 8:23]

The arrows indicate the series of tries which make up the repair segment. These tries are of a progressive nature (Schegloff, 1979): each next try displays progress over the just prior one in terms of resolving the problematic utterance. In the series of repairs which begin at the "ff-" and terminate with the utterance "for your(.) offering(.) your help(h)(h) wi[th the truck," Han has shifted from simply thanking Irene:

for your [he-help

to specifically thanking her:

for your(.) offering(.) your help(h)(h) wi[th the truck.

In the last in the series of tries, Han inserts the item "offering." This repair by insertion neatly

finetunes the talk such that Han ends up, most correctly, thanking Irene for her offer of help and not for her actual help, given that in the end Han did not borrow Irene's truck.

That the series of tries on the troublesource utterance is ordered progressively may form a part of an interactional formula for accomplishing repair. The progressive element may serve as a cap on a repair's upper reaches, providing both speaker and recipient with a resource for projecting when the repair segment will reach completion, whether the series of tries will lead to successful resolution of the problem, and so on.

More generally, then, the repair segment is viewed as a process or line of development (Schegloff, lectures) in the talk to which both speaker and recipient orient. In the running of its course, a repair segment may include stages in its development. These stages signal repair-initiation, repair-completion, and number of tries executed on a troublesome utterance.[3]

This brief overview reveals that the methodic practices employed by NNSs for doing repair in the same-turn as contains the troublesource talk are similar to those ascribed to NSs. It is with these similarities in mind that the element "yeah" is of heightened concern because the form of "yeah" about to be introduced is not found in native speaker English conversation.

Database

The data collected and transcribed for this study, which is composed of roughly 120 pages of transcript, consist of naturally occurring telephone conversations from twelve NS-NNS dyads. The speakers are friends who ordinarily have occasion to chat with one another. They did not speak with one another solely for the purposes of making a recording. Topics were not suggested or assigned. The recorded conversations were transcribed using a transcription system originally developed by Gail Jefferson (cf. Atkinson and Heritage, 1984).

The Element "Yeah" in Same-Turn Repair

The focus of this article concerns the element "yeah" (and sometimes "yaaah") which was found in instances of same-turn repair produced by nonnative speakers of English as illustrated in the following three examples.

(12)

Vera: hh *h well I kindof get thee idea

Huang: Yeah

Vera: it sounds like a good:: name

(0.2)

Huang: Mm hmm we likeit too(h)(h)

Vera: G[oood

Huang: [So *h yeah so: we: iffu: iffu- eh then we *h we:

→ put the- the Chinese name (0.4) uh yaaahhh we put the Chinese name *h like uh meedle naymeh name hhh so his name is Steveen *h Sheng Shao Sun

Vera: MM hmm.

[HV, 15:3]

(13)

Han: Oh I:: see so you- [g-o

Irene: [well-

Han: there first to to interview uh something then *h when the uh::

Irene:=Then come back here:

Han: =Uh huh

Irene: An' then:: maybe move back in: September

→ Han: Oh you mean when: d- yeah when the position is available [in ( )

[IH, 6:9]

(14)

Mary: about um:: (0.2) tch *h it was about (0.2) four

(0.2)

→ Chu: I was- yeah I- I was not here(h) so I guess Ma Li was in the bedroom

Mary: Aw::

Chu=*h have a sleep [so

Mary: [I thought so

[CM, 1:3]

It is observed that in the immediate sequential environment which precedes the "yeah" something in the talk is displayed as troublesome or problematic. Trouble is signaled by the use of one or more perturbations, for example, the pause of four tenths of a second and the "uh" in (12), the elongated "when:" which is followed by a cutoff "d-" in (13), and the cutoff "was-" in (14). The repair trajectory begins at the perturbation, but notice that following the repair initiator the talk does not go immediately to that which completes the repair. Thus a preliminary observation about the "yeah" is that it occurs at a moment in the repair trajectory after repair has been initiated.

Another observation about the "yeah" is that it occurs with varying forms of same-turn repair. The "yeah" is found in repair segments involving replacement as exemplified in (13) above. Han's replacement of the "d-" with the word "the" may reflect a rearticulation of an incipient 'duh'.

Also in (15) below, Han finetunes the talk when he replaces the utterance "just the middle of" with the utterance "almossa middle of duh:: summer session." The "yeah" occurs just prior to the repair (by replacement):

(15)

Han: Yeah I hope you will sit in our class (h)uh

Han: [h-(h)uh-(h)uh-huh

Irene: [I will I- *h I will come- I don't know if I'll come to it(h) (0.2) I- I think I'll start comin' t(h)o it(h):: uh:: maybe aft(h)er my Boston trip

Han: =Yeah that'd-

Han: [be-

Irene: [because-

→ Han: just the middle of the then justuh yeah almossa middle of duh:: summer session right

Irene: =tch Okay what- *h wh- jus' um:: so I know what(.) what classroom do you meet in

[IH, 7:1]

The "yeah" is also found in repair segments involving insertion:

(16)

Li: Yeah::(.) yeah (h) an::d (0.5) uh: I called him once *h you da better call him::

(0.3)

Li: [uh::

Sara: [((sound of papers being shuffled))

Li: after:: one uh clock *h

Li: because he- eh his roommate is American *h an' uh he works in thee evening

um:: thuh whole evening *h an' then he came back in thuh

Li: [morning

Sara: [(h)(h)(h)(h) [((papers shuffling))

Sara: Yeah

→ Li: Uh he co- yeah he(.) usually comes back in thuh morning *h an' then he:: (h)

goes:: to bed:: you see (h)=

[SL, 7:17]

Li cuts off the utterance "co-" and inserts the item "usually." Subsequent to that, she produces the word "comes" which was apparently the word she was about to produce in turn initial position.

Finally, the "yeah" occurs in repair segments involving deletion:

(17)

Huang: so(.) I push uh about uh three *h three an' a half hour

Jane: =Haw:::

→ Huang: It's not- (h) yeah it's a long time so *h (I-) so:: doctor said uh mm let's try iffu you know iffu(.) baby can come out but it's really tch *h (0.2) really you know it's really you know it's really work(h)i(h)-(h)u(h)

[HJ, 13:1]

Huang deletes the word "not" in the repair "it's a long time." The repair changes the polarity of the utterance from negative to positive (Note that in (14), however, the polarity goes from positive to negative after the repair is made).

Cutting across a variety of techniques for accomplishing repair in the same-turn, then, it is observed that the element "yeah" occurs in self-initiated repair segments produced by nonnative speakers of English (whose native language is Mandarin). I suggest that the "yeah" is used to signal that the solution to a repair is close at hand. The "yeah" may demarcate a right boundary in a same-turn repair segment, the point after which the talk goes to completion of the repair and continues relatively fluently. In this regard, it is important to examine the talk which comes after the "yeah."

The Talk After the "Yeah"

Juxtaposed to the troublesome environment which precedes the "yeah," notice that the sequential environment which immediately follows the "yeah" has, largely, trouble-free talk as exemplified in (12), (13), (16), and (17) above. Whatever was problematic in the talk before the "yeah" appears to have been resolved in the talk after the "yeah." The talk coming after the "yeah" is fairly fluent and often gets the speaker to the end of the turn at which point a change of speaker occurs.

Repetition is a feature of the fluent talk which occurs after the "yeah." The words coming after the "yeah" partially repeat the talk which comes before the "yeah." The repeated element marks the beginning of a next try at producing a similar bit of talk, a same but modified version of the troublesource utterance. Modification takes the form of replacement, insertion, deletion, and

the like. Thus in these data the current speaker (NNS) persists in making the repair in a form which by and large retains the troublesource utterance.

Maintaining a troublesource utterance in the face of repair represents a particular course of action taken by the one initiating repair because the methodic practices of mundane conversation also provide for ways of producing a same-turn repair which do not recycle or maintain the troublesource utterance. Consider, for example, one form of repair mentioned earlier, aborted attempt, of which I provide two examples below for purposes of contrast with same-turn repairs that make use of the element "yeah."

Aborted Attempt

During the course of an ongoing turn at talk, a current speaker may produce a next try at repair which is displayed as a form different from that used in the troublesource utterance:

(18)

Han: Ssso:: *h maybe uh (0.2) we can manage now (h)u(h)

Irene: Oh::[::

Han: [Yeah(h)i(h)

Han: *h [good (eh-)

Irene: [Oh:: oh well that's nice

→ Han: Yeah because uh:: they are tch *h because some- you know *h on that day we will move- move outt andda (0.2) another couple will move in *h so we can share that- uh that pickup

Irene: Oh::[: well that works out pretty well

Han: [( )

[IH, 2:1]

Notice that even though Han's initial attempt at repair leaves the troublesource utterance intact, that is, the replacement of "because uh:: they are" with "because some-," he does not bring this first attempt at repair to a completion. He cuts off the utterance at the word "some-," and in a subsequent attempt at repair, he offers as a solution to the problem a wholescale replacement of the original troublesome utterance:

you know *h on that day we will move- move outt andda (0.2) another couple will move in *h so we can share that- uh that pickup

In another instance of aborted attempt, notice that the speaker makes three attempts at addressing whatever is problematic in the talk:

(19)

Beth: I never particularly thought I wantid to be but I think I'm envious huh-huh-huh

→ Lin: Well if- it's- it's not tha- *h well every(one-) (would-) n- nnot everybody has that luckg

Beth: e(h)uh-huh=

[BL, 12:9-10]

While these attempts at repairing the talk are ordered progressively ("Well if-", "it's-", and "it's not tha-"), the outcome of the third try at repair is not successful. The syntactic progression built up in the series of repairs "Well if- it's- it's not tha-" is terminated at the cutoff "tha-."

What follows the cutoff "tha-" is an inbreath and a "well." The "well" occurring after the inbreath is a repeat of the just prior "well," which is a turn initial "well." By beginning a next try

with a repeat of the turn initiator ("well"), what Lin displays is that he will restart the turn. The next item which occurs after the repeated "well" is a new item ("every(one-)"). This item marks the beginning of a different version on the troublesource utterance. At the moment of the item "every(one-)," the speaker restarts the turn in a way different from how he had started before.

Beth and Lin had been discussing a mutual friend who had just gotten married and enjoys the status of being a lady of leisure. Beth expresses a certain amount of envy. Lin may have been trying to comfort Beth about being single. However, in the abandonment of one way of saying something in favor of a new, fresh start, what Lin may have produced instead is perhaps a gaffe. At the right boundary of this repair segment, Lin ends up telling Beth that getting married is a matter of "luck."

What this example and the one just prior to it are taken to display is that other courses of action in the accomplishment of repair in same-turn include a complete replacement of the troublesource utterance, a restart of the turn, etc. It is in juxtaposition to forms of same-turn repair such as these that the data involving the element "yeah" are striking. The current speaker who uses "yeah" does not abandon one way of saying something in favor of another. There is no new, fresh start. The talk which comes after the "yeah" is a same but slightly modified version of the troublesome utterance. The repeated element which occurs after the "yeah" may serve to orient both current and next speakers to the interactional matter: 'What I (current speaker) am saying now is what I was saying before.'

A 'Place' in the Talk: Incipient Repair Solution

In the environment of same-turn repair, the "yeah" occupies an interactional space after repair-initiation but before repair-completion. At the moment of the "yeah," the current speaker

signals that he or she has settled on a solution to whatever was troublesome in the talk. Coming at a moment after which fairly fluent direct talk follows, the "yeah" may demarcate another stage in the line of development of a repair segment:incipient repair solution.

If this analysis of the "yeah" is plausible, what it suggests is that aside from the locations of repair-initiation and repair-completion, there may be a sequential place in the course of a repair trajectory which comes just in advance of the repair proper, that is, incipient repair solution, at least as processed by nonnative speakers of English.

Often, one finds a brief pause or micropause in this sequential environment (Note: A micropause, which is symbolized as a dot enclosed in parentheses, represents a pause of less than a tenth of a second).

(20)

Chen: Oh:: you- [you got my numbuh:: from Li Li Hwa.

Joan: [(h)(h)

→ Chen: [But jus' uh:: two hours (0.2) two hours ago I wen' to thuh office o[f Harry

Joan: [Yeah [(h) yeah (h)yeah (h)hih-(h)hih

(0.3)

Chen: An' I left uh:: my address an':: uh:: phone numbuh (0.5) uh:: to him.

[CJ, 3:25]

(21)

Huang: tch but uh but uh now we- we- we- al- always uh

→ cohl(.) call him Ste(veen) (ween)

[HV, 15:10]

(22)

→ Ruan: °h uh:: sso do you( ) what do you need me to bring (h)(h)

[RL, 1:12]

(23)

Ruan: [Yeah

Liz: [Um:: °h yeah you- why (don't you-) [(that'll be something)

→ Ruan: [if- if- no one( ) if no one bring I can bring drinks that's easy for me

[RL, 4:16]

Troubled disfluent talk is found to the left of the pause or micropause and relatively trouble-free fluent talk to the right of the pause or micropause. The pause or micropause is also sequentially positioned at a moment of solution, a moment when the speaker appears to disengage a just prior troublesome utterance from an up-and-coming repair.[4]

Considering, then, that a pause or micropause may also occur at the sequential location of incipient repair solution, this suggests that in my data the "yeah" may be an overt marker of repair for the nonnative speakers of English. At the moment in a repair segment when the current speaker utters "yeah," he or she (NNS) overtly signals: 'I have reached a solution to whatever was problematic in the talk.' And in what follows the "yeah," the talk which completes the repair segment is produced.

The point is registered, however, that not all instances of "yeah" found in self-initiated repair segments necessarily do the job of signaling incipient repair solution. In the data examined, there was a form of "yeah" in which the "yeah" does not signal a moment of solution in the repair segment. This other function of "yeah" is paraphrasable as, "how can I say/explain" + "yeah."

The instances are all produced by the same nonnative speaker; there is the risk that what is being tracked reflects idiosyncratic usage. Nonetheless, we can still initially look to see how these occurrences might be related to the proposed analysis of "yeah" in same-turn repair segments.

"How Can I Say Explain + "Yeah"

Occasionally, a "yeah" occurs after the utterance "how can I say" or "how can I explain":

(24)

Huang: Yeah:: and duh yih know I try called(.) called you to tell (0.2) tell you about that (tch)

(0.6)

Vera: Well

Vera: [thanks for calling even though I wasn't home

Huang: [Mm- I- I- I-

Huang: Mm hih hih °h

Vera: Thank you

Huang: Mm hmm(.) a-an dum(.) he's fine tc(h) now in-

→ nn- yih know he- nn- (0.2) how can I say yeah mm yih know he- °h his weight tuh::: issa eight(.) point three pounds

Vera: uh huh::

Huang: =[big boy

Vera: [That's a good weight.

[HV, 2:16]

(25)

Huang: *h that means um mm yih know an ss- som-som-something happen nnow

or ss- some- some- some- something will become

(0.6)

Vera: Uh huh

Huang: some

Huang: [thing like that

Vera: [Oh gooood

Huang: something like that shshao means uh hh

→ tch I don't know how- can I explain hh in English

(1.8)

→ Huang: Yeah jus- just like uh *h an:: (0.4) (h)(h) I don't know

(0.4)

Huang: (h)(h)(h)

Vera: ehuh-huh-huh-huh-huh

Vera: hih *h Well I kinduv get thee idea

Huang: yeah

Vera: It sounds like a good name

[HV, 14:17]

(26)

Vera: I'm so glad God took care of you and thuh baby I've been praying for you

Huang: hih hih thank you

Vera: *h an I- I'm jus' glad that everything went well

Huang: Yeah it's-

Huang: [everything issa fine

Vera: [both of you are very h (0.2) strong an healthy

Huang: Yeah he- he(.) uh really good he really

→ yih know *h *h an:: an:: how can I say yyaahh I:: I- I got uh haw- hospital issa

May: seventeenth

(0.2)

Vera: [mm hmm

Huang: [tch that day issa my due day

Vera: mm hmm

[HV, 5:13]

To the left of the expression "how can I say" or "how can I explain," something in the talk is displayed as troublesome. Trouble is signaled by the use of repair initiators, for example, the elements "in- nn- yih know he- nn- (0.2)" in (24), the elements "uh hh tch" in (25), and the elements "*h *h an:: an::" in (26). Also notice that repair initiators occur to the right of the "yeah." In (24), Huang produces "mm yih know he- *h"; in (25), she produces "jus- just like uh *h an:: (0.4) (h)(h)", and in (26), she produces "I:: I- I got uh haw-."

A word search is underway before the utterance "how can I say/explain" + "yeah" is produced. But notice that the next item coming immediately after the "yeah" is not the conclusion of the search. The search which began before the utterance "how can I explain/say" + "yeah," is still in progress after the "yeah."

A common troublesource appears to be one of lexical retrieval. In (25), Huang cannot find a way of translating the Chinese name "shao." In (24) and (26), she seems to have difficulty coming up with proper verb forms, that is, weighs in (24) and went in (26).

These examples differ from the instances of "yeah" discussed earlier. The phrase "how can I say/explain" announces a search. What occurs after the utterance "how can I say/explain" + "yeah" is more search. The "yeah" coming after "how can I say/explain" does not signal incipient repair solution. This "yeah," coming after an announcement of a search, keeps the repair segment in an open state. The repair segment is not ready for closure after the saying of "how can I explain/say" + "yeah" because the solution to the search has yet to be delivered.

Although future work will need to clarify this, it may be that by positioning a "yeah" immediately after the announcement of a search (e.g., "how can I say" and "how can I explain"), the speaker subverts its use as a marker of incipient repair solution. Quick and easy success may not lie at the right boundary of this sort of announced search. There is even a real possibility of failure as exemplified in (25). The second arrowed line marks the beginning of a subsequent attempt at explaining the Chinese name "shao." Notice that this attempt terminates in failure (i.e., Huang's "I don't know"). Vera collaborates, alleviating Huang from trying again to explain the meaning of "shao," when she produces two sequential closing utterances: "hih *h Well I kinduv get thee idea" and "it sounds like a good name."

Discussion

Using the inductive, empirically-based approach of conversation analysis in examining instances of same-turn repair produced by NNSs in NS-NNS conversation, it is interesting to discover that the element "yeah" is a feature of repairing talk for second language learners. Use of

this feature cuts across a variety of techniques for accomplishing repair in the same turn, e g. deletion, insertion, word search, and the like. The element "yeah" offers further evidence for the claim that repair is a line or process of development in the talk (Schegloff et al., 1977).

The findings of this study reconfirm just how flexible and broad the forms of conversational organization are. They also illustrate that speakers use the resources of the language in ways which we could not have imagined, idealized, or hypothesized (Heritage, 1984). While a repair initiator may signal a sequential place in the talk where trouble is on, the place in the talk where we find a pause, micropause, or "yeah" may be indicative of a place where the speaker signals a moment of solution in the repair process. That there may be a structural place in the organization of a self-initiated repair which comes just in advance of the repair solution lends further support to the claim that repair is a sequential phenomenon composed of 'reparative segments which have an organization of their own' (Schegloff et al.,1977).

As a mechanism for restructuring ongoing talk in the current turn, the element "yeah" in its function as an overt marker of a sequential place incipient repair solution does more than reflect a coping strategy (cf. communication strategies). It reaffirms that the resources of the language are locally contingent matters for interactants, including the not-yet-competent. As Schegloff (1989) has stated:

> for the not-yet-competent the children, the strangers, and so forth...time is slower, each aspect larger, recognizing and negotiating through the contingencies a more robust project, and all of it potentially being both done and learned at the same time. They learn to deal with the moment-to-moment contingencies of life in interaction, and the details of life in interaction, with their deployment of language and other conduct. The language

learned there has its character and structure informed b the structure and contingencies of interaction, just as the practices for using the language are so informed. (Schegloff, 1989, p.152)

Some limitations of the study should be noted. First, the nonnative speakers were restricted to those whose native language is Mandarin. We still need to know whether NNSs with other native languages also produce the element "yeah" in similar repair environments. Second, we do not know whether this form of "yeah" reflects transfer from the native language, that is, Mandarin and possibly other Chinese dialects. If future research reveals that transfer of this sort exists, then it is interesting as well that interactional behavior which includes orientation to repair mechanisms may be transferable from language one to another.

With respect to the question of how the element "yeah" might be tied to repair practices in Mandarin, if at all, analysts might consider collecting instances such as those which I introduce below. Based on a limited inspection of the data found in Tao's (1995) study on self-initiated repairs, I find two sorts of examples worth tracking in future research in order to see how they might possibly relate to the element "yeah". Mindful of the limited inspection of the data, however, I offer tentative observations about these instances below.

In one set of examples, Mandarin speakers pause just before uttering a self-initiated repair. (Note: In the transcription system used by Tao (1995), a comma symbolizes a brief pause.)

(27)

→ F: Dai'a shang, shang nim'n jia qu le

Take him go go your home go Asp

F: I took him to, to your home.

[Tao, 1995, ex. 1]

(28)

→ B: Zai ner dangle::, wu- ge yue:, liang' e yue fanyi

at there work-Asp five- Cl month two Cl month interpreter

B: There (I) worked as an interpreter for five- months for two months.

[Tao, 1995, ex.8]

(29)

→ D: 'm. Tam'n lai le yihou zai diao, (0.2) zai ban guanxi ba?

They come Asp after then transfer then attend to work Q

D: Ah, after they arrive they then get transferred, then attend to their work, right?

[Tao, 1995, ex. 2]

In (27), it is unclear what the nature of the trouble is. Speaker F repeats the verb "shang" ("to go") before continuing with the utterance "shang nim'n jia qu le" ("to your home"). In the other two cases, the speakers produce self-corrections. In (28), speaker B replaces the utterance "wu-ge yue::," ("for five- months") with the utterance "liang' e yue" ("for two months"). In (29), speaker D replaces the utterance "zai diao" ("then transfer") with the utterance "zai ban guanxi ba" ("then attend to their work"). In all three cases, a pause or micropause is situated at a sequential place just in advance of repair completion.

In another set of examples, the speaker produces what Tao (1995) refers to as a lexicalized filler.

(30)

→ B: ai, ta::, zheige, shenme, ta zhei ge ren na, eh::, zhide
Yes she this what she this CL person Int worth
huainian.
remembering

B: Yes she, she is a person (who is) really worth remembering.

[Tao, 1995, ex.4]

(31)

B: eh, meiyou zheiga:, zheiga kang bing de nengli ya, meiyou
Neg. possess this this anti illness Poss. ability Int. Neg. possess
le
Asp

B: (they) don't have this, this the ability to resist illness is gone.

[Tao, 1995, ex.12]

(32)

→ B: Ni, ni xiang nei shemma, nei hur de:, wen( ) wo de zheige
you you for example that what that time ASSOC dip I POSS this
zheige wenping a
this diploma Int

B: You see, that stuff, the dip(loma) from the old days (.) my diploma

[Tao, 1995, ex.9]

In (30), Speaker B initiates repair at the elongated word "ta::" ("she"), which is followed by a brief pause. Subsequent to that, he produces the utterance "zheige shenme" ("this what") and after which he recycles the word "ta" ("she"), producing a fluent utterance which draws the turn to a closure. The repair is one of word search.

In (31), the repair is one of restructuring. The speaker begins the turn with the utterance "meiyou" ("they don't have"). After producing the utterance "zheiga:, zheiga" ("this this"), the speaker produces a repair. The repair changes the structure of the emerging syntax from a subject-verb-object construction ("they don't have") to a topic-comment construction (Chao, 1968) ("the ability to resist illness is gone", more literally, "the ability to resist illness, they don't have anymore"). Also notice that in the restructuring, the turn initial utterance "meiyou" ("they don't have") is repeated, used in conjunction with the aspectual marker "le" as a means of completing the turn.

In (32), the repair is one of replacement. The speaker's elongated item "de::" and stoppage of the word "diploma" at its first syllable ("wen") signal entry into a repair segment. After repair has been initiated, the speaker produces an utterance which replaces the troublesome utterance "nei hur de::, wen" ("the dip(loma) of that time") with the utterance "wo de zheige zheige wenping" ("my diploma"). This case is slightly different from (30) and (31). The lexicalized filler "zheige zheige" ("this this") is situated after repair has already begun at the utterance "wo de" ("my"), but before the repair is fully completed at the resaying of the word "wenping"

("diploma"), which was stopped upon the production of the first syllable in the troublesource talk ("wen").

Given what was reported earlier about the element "yeah," it is at least worth noting that in the three examples just discussed, lexicalized fillers occur in same-turn repair environments cutting across differing forms of repair, that is, word search, replacement, and restructuring. The lexicalized filler seems to occur at a sequential moment after repair initiation but before repair completion. Also, in contrast to the single item "yeah," it is observed in examples (30) – (32) that the lexicalized filler is a two-word unit ("zheige shenme," "zheiga zheiga," and "zheige zheige"). This observation is compatible with the point made earlier that there is no fixed or preestablished length to a repair segment. How long or short a repair segment ends up being is the product of an interactional process (Schegloff, lectures). Further research is clearly needed in order to fully clarify underlying similarities between the element "yeah" and lexicalized fillers used in Mandarin same-turn repair segments.

Conclusion

In the overview of the literature on same-turn repair, I have revealed that the systematic practices employed by nonnative speakers for doing repair in the same-turn as contains the troublesource talk are similar to those ascribed to native speakers (Schegloff et al., 1977). That NS repair production is confirmed in the speech of NNS who are second language learners is a point worth registering, contributing to our knowledge of what goes on in cross-cultural repair (cf. Gaskill, 1980 and Schwartz, 1980). In addition, what the discussion of the element "yeah" offers is a way of looking at how the context of being a nonnative speaker possibly matters in the conversation. That is, the nonnative speaker as a social participant has available and brings to the

interaction resources of the language which may be, at times, different from those deployed by native speakers. But it is not enough to invoke context (Schegloff, 1991). It is not enough to say that nonnative speakers who are second language learners rely on repair strategies as a means of coping with an inadequate and incomplete language system. In this regard, analysts need to show in the details of the conversation how it is that nonnative speakers produce the talk, orient to the talk, or repair the talk in ways which are different from that done by native speakers.

Out of this investigation, one comes away with the sense that the notion of sequential relevancies, which is a resource by which participants themselves come to produce talk that is mutually intelligible may be somewhat different when the context is NS-NNS interaction. On some occasions, NNSs use the resources of the language to create new or alternative ways of dealing with troubles in the talk, and in doing so, they display their identities as nonnative speakers, as speakers and learners of the language of interaction at one and the same time.

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Notes:

[1] Cf. Jefferson (1974).

[2] Cf. Daden (1976) on same turn repairs in Quiche conversation. She finds a cutoff, a common repair initiator, absent from her data and claims this is because in Quiche the cutoff is phonemic. Also cf. Schegloff (1987).

[3] Levelt (1983) also discusses the notion of phases in the self-repairing process.

[4] Levelt (1983) refers to self-initiated repairs of this sort as 'covert repairs.'